

IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel claims 5 and 12.

Amend claims 1, 6, 7, 9, 11, and 13 – 15 as set forth below:

1. (currently amended) A method of predicting the lapping property of a lapping plate, comprising:
 - (a) positioning a tool on a lapping plate;
 - (b) rotating the lapping plate;
 - (c) restraining the tool relative to the lapping plate;
 - (d) measuring frictional force between the tool and the lapping plate;
 - (e) measuring a consumption of the tool by the lapping plate by detecting a gap distance between the tool and the lapping plate; and
 - (f) determining a lapping rate of the lapping plate.
2. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising rotating the lapping plate for a specific time so that adequate removal of material from the tool occurs, determining the lapping rate over a time interval, and assessing the lapping rate and friction to determine if the lapping plate is acceptable.
3. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising determining the lapping rate under a fixed load and a fixed rotation speed, and thereby calculating a coefficient of friction and a Preston coefficient of the lapping plate.
4. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein step (e) is non-invasive.
5. (canceled)
6. (currently amended) [[The method of claim 1, wherein step (c) comprises]] A method of predicting the lapping property of a lapping plate, comprising:
 - (a) positioning a tool on a lapping plate;
 - (b) rotating the lapping plate;

- (c) restraining the tool relative to the lapping plate by holding the tool with a set of guide wheels that keep the tool in place when the lapping plate is rotating;
- (d) measuring frictional force between the tool and the lapping plate;
- (e) measuring a consumption of the tool by the lapping plate; and
- (f) determining a lapping rate of the lapping plate.

7. (currently amended) [[The method of claim 1,]] A method of predicting the lapping property of a lapping plate, comprising:

- (a) positioning a tool on a lapping plate;
- (b) rotating the lapping plate;
- (c) restraining the tool relative to the lapping plate;
- (d) measuring frictional force between the tool and the lapping plate;
- (e) measuring a consumption of the tool by the lapping plate;
- (f) determining a lapping rate of the lapping plate; and further comprising mounting a plurality of specimens to the tool for contact with and consumption by the lapping plate.

8. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising charging the lapping plate with abrasive.

9. (currently amended) [[The method of claim 1,]] A method of predicting the lapping property of a lapping plate, comprising:

- (a) positioning a tool on a lapping plate;
- (b) rotating the lapping plate;
- (c) restraining the tool relative to the lapping plate;
- (d) measuring frictional force between the tool and the lapping plate;
- (e) measuring a consumption of the tool by the lapping plate;
- (f) determining a lapping rate of the lapping plate; and further comprising adding a weight to the tool so that the tool and the lapping plate experience a pressure that is analogous to a slider lapping pressure.

10. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein step (d) comprises using a strain gage.

11. (currently amended) A method of predicting the lapping property of a lapping plate, comprising:

- (a) positioning a tool on a lapping plate that is charged with abrasive;
- (b) rotating the lapping plate for a specific time to remove material from the tool;
- (c) restraining the tool relative to the lapping plate;
- (d) measuring frictional force between the tool and the lapping plate;
- (e) measuring a consumption of the tool by the lapping plate non-invasively and detecting a gap distance between the tool and the lapping plate; and
- (f) determining a lapping rate of the lapping plate over a time interval, and assessing the lapping rate and friction to determine if the lapping plate is acceptable, wherein the lapping rate is determined under a fixed load and a fixed rotation speed, and thereby calculating a coefficient of friction and a Preston coefficient of the lapping plate.

12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) [[The method of claim 11, wherein step (c) comprises]] A method of predicting the lapping property of a lapping plate, comprising:

- (a) positioning a tool on a lapping plate that is charged with abrasive;
- (b) rotating the lapping plate for a specific time to remove material from the tool;
- (c) restraining the tool relative to the lapping plate by holding the tool with a set of guide wheels that keep the tool in place when the lapping plate is rotating;
- (d) measuring frictional force between the tool and the lapping plate;
- (e) measuring a consumption of the tool by the lapping plate; and
- (f) determining a lapping rate of the lapping plate over a time interval, and assessing the lapping rate and friction to determine if the lapping plate is acceptable, wherein the lapping rate is determined under a fixed load and a fixed rotation speed, and thereby calculating a coefficient of friction and a Preston coefficient of the lapping plate.

14. (currently amended) [[The method of claim 11,]] A method of predicting the lapping property of a lapping plate, comprising:

- (a) positioning a tool on a lapping plate that is charged with abrasive;
- (b) rotating the lapping plate for a specific time to remove material from the tool;
- (c) restraining the tool relative to the lapping plate;
- (d) measuring frictional force between the tool and the lapping plate;
- (e) measuring a consumption of the tool by the lapping plate;
- (f) determining a lapping rate of the lapping plate over a time interval, and assessing the lapping rate and friction to determine if the lapping plate is acceptable, wherein the lapping rate is determined under a fixed load and a fixed rotation speed, and thereby calculating a coefficient of friction and a Preston coefficient of the lapping plate; and further comprising

mounting a plurality of specimens to the tool for contact with and consumption by the lapping plate.

15. (currently amended) [[The method of claim 11,]] A method of predicting the lapping property of a lapping plate, comprising:

- (a) positioning a tool on a lapping plate that is charged with abrasive;
- (b) rotating the lapping plate for a specific time to remove material from the tool;
- (c) restraining the tool relative to the lapping plate;
- (d) measuring frictional force between the tool and the lapping plate;
- (e) measuring a consumption of the tool by the lapping plate;
- (f) determining a lapping rate of the lapping plate over a time interval, and assessing the lapping rate and friction to determine if the lapping plate is acceptable, wherein the lapping rate is determined under a fixed load and a fixed rotation speed, and thereby calculating a coefficient of friction and a Preston coefficient of the lapping plate; and further comprising

adding a weight to the tool so that the tool and the lapping plate experience a pressure that is analogous to a slider lapping pressure.

16. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein step (d) comprises using a strain gage.